THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does Not arise.

(c) No airline has indicated its willingness to operate international flights through Madurai airport.

Revival of Air India

2506. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 934 given in the Rajya Sabha on December 8, 1998 and state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Airlines has 24,000 employees for their 24 aircraft operation which is more than double to figures of any Airlines in the world;

(b) whether it is also a fact that most of its aircraft are old and redundant and the Airline is in no position to replace them;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) how Government plan to revive this Airline?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Air India with a fleet strength of 26 aircraft has 18751 employees as on 31.3.1998. The number of emplyees per aircraft is 721 which is higher in comparison with other reputed airlines.

(b) and (c) The average age of the fleet is as under:

Type	No. of Aircraft	Average Age (Years)
B747-200	7	21.8
B747-300	2	10.0
B747-400	6	03.9
A300	3	16.2
A310	8	11.3

Expansion/renewal of fleet by the airlines is a continuing exercise and depends on various factors, the more impartant ones being the resouces of the airlines, traffic requirements, suitability of the aircraft type and viability of operations of various sactors/routes.

(d) The Government has also constituted a Committee of experts under the Chairmanship of Dr. Vijay Kelkar, to undertake a comprehensive examination of the reasons for the losses incurred by the Air India and to suggest strategy for turning around the company.

Meantime the Disinvestment Commission in its VIII Report on Air India has inter-alia recommended infusion of Government equity of Rs. 1000 crores and induction of a strategic partner on the basis of global bids. The recommendations of the Commission are under consideration of the Government.

Voluntary Retirement Scheme in Air India

2507. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to refer to answer to Unstarred Question 936 given in the Rajya Sabha on 8th December, 1998 and state:

(a) the details of the existing strength of Pilots, Co-Pilots and other Secretarial staff in the Air India and what is the annual expenditure incurred on account of salaries and other perrequisits and how many of them are surplus in each cadre; and

(b) whether the company has since chalked out any fresh VRS for the staff and if so, the salient feature thereof and what is the number of employees likely to avail of its benefits?

THE MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR): (a) Details are as under: